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No. 12. DECEMBER, 1874. VOL. I.

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Contributions will be thankfully received by the Treasurer, ARTHUR SPERLING, Esq.; the Secretary, Mr. W. A. BLAKE, 4, Trafalgar Square, W.C.; or by the Bankers, Messrs. SMITH, PAYNE, & SMITH, 1, Lombard Street, E.C.

A CRY FROM A MARYLEBONE MEWS

TO

THE FRIENDS OF RAGGED SCHOOLS.

We cannot but think that there are ears open to the cry of those who take upon them the work of substitution, and plead for those who cannot plead for themselves; and therefore we, the Committee of the York Mews Ragged Schools, in the name of the hundred poor children attending our Schools, very earnestly plead for funds to carry on the good work of giving them the only education it is possible for them to obtain.

In active operation are Ragged Schools—boys', girls', and infants'—morning, afternoon, and evening—Sunday as well as Day Schools—Ragged Church Sunday and other Services—Lectures, Clothing Club, Penny Bank, &c.

The Schools are situate in York Mews, Paddington Street, W. They were opened under the presidency of Lord Shaftesbury, twenty years since, and have proved a blessing to many a ragged child and many a desolate home.

Contributions will be thankfully received by the Treasurer, J. ROBINSON, Esq., 32, Devonshire Street, Portland Place; the Hon. Secretary, Mr. W. A. BLAKE, 4, Trafalgar Square, Charing Cross; and by Mr. J. G. GENT, at the Office of the Ragged School Union, 1, Exeter Hall, Strand.

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THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS CLOSE ON THE 31st INST.

SINCE LAST JANUARY

EIGHT HUNDRED AND FIFTY-ONE

OF THE

Friendless and Fallen Females

Of this great City, many of whom were in extreme peril, have been benefited by the

London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institution.

At the Respective Homes, Euston Road, Holloway, West Brompton, Fulham, and St. Pancras, 311 were admitted to the Institution, and 540 to the Open-all-Night Reception House.

Notwithstanding an increase amounting in all to £250 in the cost of household necessaries, coals, &c., the Committee have not restricted their operations in any way.

THE LOSS OF SUPPORTERS.—During the last three years the Committee have lost more than sixty supporters by death. Will none come forward to take their place?

The Committee are in absolute need of Funds to support the Seven Homes, which accommodate ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FOUR INMATES.

£12 10s. (Donation of) will sustain all the Homes one day.

Reader! Imagine the earnest entreaty of applicants for succour, often urged with the most fervent importunity, and supported by tears which indicate such a sense of peril and need as to render refusal almost impossible.

Messrs. Bosanquet, Salt, & Co., Bankers, 73, Lombard Street, E.C., and Francis Nicholls, Esq. (of the Committee), 14, Old Jewry Chambers, E.C., will thankfully receive CONTRIBUTIONS; or

EDWARD W. THOMAS, Secretary,
Office, 200, Euston Road, N.W.

*** *The Secretary will most gladly forward a detailed Report.*

CHRISTMAS IN RAGGED SCHOOLS.

THOMAS HOOD once wrote, "It is good to be merry *and* wise, which is far better than being *other*-wise." At no season is this old adage, with the modern addition, more applicable than at Christmas—a season specially devoted to family gatherings, and which poor children regard as a red-letter day in their history. At no time, indeed, do rich philanthropists more respect the laws of true hospitality; and thus they carry out Nehemiah's injunction, "Send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared."

Though there is probably too much eating and drinking by all classes at Christmastide, yet it is one of the best features of the age that so many redeem the day by devoting some portion of it to giving dinners to poor children, or to equally needy adults. Prior to Christmas, the newspapers are inundated with appeals to defray the expense of dinners on Christmas Day to casuals, outcasts, and other destitute persons; and in no case, we are glad to say, is the appeal made in vain. For old Father Christmas, amongst his other good qualities, seems ever to be able readily to open the hearts and unlock the coffers of the well-to-do classes.

Now, to do all this in memory of the homeless babe of Bethlehem, is a practical preaching of the Gospel such as the vilest or most obtuse cannot misunderstand. In fact, merely to invite a ragged boy or girl to a Christmas dinner, is to tell them of the Saviour and His coming into our earth, and of what he came to our earth to do. It is a similar practical sermon when any one collects around him the fallen, the wretched, the forsaken, or the needy. It is something more than roast beef and plum pudding that you give them when you invite them to a Christmas dinner. They feel that they are not utterly neglected, and that there are Christian hearts to pity, and Christian hands stretched out to save them. A few years ago it was not the fashion to think of them. But happily Christians are waking up to their duty in this matter, for they recognise the grand old Bible truth that God hath "made men of one blood to dwell upon the face of the whole earth."

Ragged School teachers, we need scarcely say, are foremost in this good work. Some of the oldest have for many years given

dinners to scholars or adults, either on Christmas Day or during Christmas week. Amongst these Gray's Yard, Golden Lane, George Yard, Lamb and Flag, and New Tothill Street, are prominent. Field Lane, for the past eight years, has on Christmas morning dined 500 of the men and women who attend this the first London Ragged Church, after a special service. Amongs tthe guests at this strange Christmas "dinner party," we saw casuals, mendicants, gutter-rakers, chickweed and fern gatherers, drovers, costermongers, ex-thieves, and worn-out acrobats, together with broken-down shopkeepers, professionals, and gentlemen by birth and education. Too many of the women, also, had lost character as well as caste, either by sheer folly or by sin. But, whatever their history, there they were, in all their poverty and misery, gathered in the name and on the birthday of Him who "came to seek and to save that which was lost." The bill of fare in 1873 was as follows:—400 lbs. of roast beef, 540 lbs. of plum pudding, 448 lbs. of potatoes, 200 half-quartern loaves, and water *ad lib.* How they contrived to eat such a dinner without dyspepsia following is an enigma which we cannot solve; but, strange to say, all hospital physicians concur in the opinion that whatever may be their other ailments, casuals, mendicants, and other social outcasts, are at least free from that malady which afflicts so many of the better fed classes, viz., indigestion, with all its protean ills.

On these festive occasions most Ragged Schools are so covered with laurel, holly, and other evergreens, that the walls are completely hidden. In fact, it does not need a great stretch of imagination to fancy that you are inside one of the booths built in court-yard or on roof by the Jews on the feast of tabernacles. On the walls, too, there are well-chosen mottoes formed either of laurel or coloured paper. Conspicuous amongst them we read the word "Welcome" as we enter the school-room, and equally read this feeling in every face. We also read many Scripture texts suited to the season, and such words as these, which waken an echo in the heart of every visitor, "Long live Lord Shaftesbury," and "God bless our Ragged School."

In every case we think it right to add, the expense of these Christmas dinners is defrayed from special donations, so that the regular school fund is not left poorer by one penny.

Another prominent feature of Christmas in Ragged Schools, is the distribution of clothing to needy children or equally needy

mothers. For example, from the parcels of clothing, old and new, sent to the Ragged School Union by many kind friends, parcels with 500 new articles, and an equal number of old garments, were forwarded to thirty Ragged Schools last Christmas, and it is expected that the same seasonable gifts will be sent to some of the needier Ragged Schools during the coming Christmas. When these parcels are made up, our office looks like an old clothes shop; but the officials are only too glad to be agents in giving such necessary articles at a time when warmth of body is a matter of life or death. Thus, Dr. Whitmore, Medical Officer of Health for Marylebone, in his report to the guardians, refers to the high price of coals, and says: "The value of the means employed for preventing the diffusion of epidemic contagious diseases may be open to question, but there cannot be two opinions as to the efficacy of bodily warmth in resisting a class of diseases which unfortunately are but little thought of, and which, as a rule, are ten times more destructive of life than the most fatal epidemics." Hence he recommends, as constituting the most urgent sanitary requirements of the poor at this season, coals, blankets, and food.

This brief sketch of Christmas in Ragged Schools would not be complete without a reference to our PENNY BANKS. Usually above two-thirds of the deposits in these Banks is drawn out the week before Christmas; and in the largest banks, such as Harrow Street and Robert Street—both with about 2,000 depositors—the energies of the managers are taxed to the utmost to meet the claims. Much, no doubt, is taken out to pay for a Christmas dinner. But surely those who have a good *meat* dinner every day in the year, will not grudge a good meal to those who rarely have a good one save on this the day of days. At all events it is far better to store up the money for the family Christmas feast in a Ragged School Penny Bank, than to subscribe to those "Goose [and Gin] Clubs," which are only an additional temptation to drunkenness.

Our space will not permit us to refer to the scholars' and parents' meetings, magic lantern entertainments, etc., which render Christmas in Ragged Schools so memorable to the poor. But whatever be the form of the festivity, all tell the poor that whilst we think primarily of their spiritual necessities, we do not forget that they have equally pressing bodily needs. Yet in this, after all, whatever we do in feeding the really destitute, we but faintly copy the example of our Divine Master, who said, after preaching to a multitude of the poor, "If I send them away fasting they will faint by the way!"

GLASGOW AND ITS RAGGED ONES.

A WRITER in the *Christian* says that while Messrs. Moody and Sankey were at Glasgow it was observed by some that while it was evident the church-going class had got a great quickening and revival, the movement had left the "lapsed masses" comparatively untouched. Mr. Moody met this objection by asserting that it was for the revived churches to carry their fresh life and energy to those who needed their sympathy and help, and that he had no doubt this *would* be the result.

The evangelistic tent on the Green very soon showed he was right; and through that work, and more especially by means of the Sabbath morning breakfasts, we have seen the very lowest class of the community reached in a way they have never heretofore been in Glasgow. These breakfasts are, during the winter, to be continued in the large Drill Hall, Greendyke Street, which has been secured to carry on the good work begun in the tent in summer. About 1,600 men, women, and children are breakfasted there every Sabbath morning, and afterwards have the free and full offer of salvation through Christ crucified pressed earnestly and lovingly on their *immediate* acceptance. This scheme originated with the young converts' fellowship-meeting in Ewing Place Church, and is kept up and admirably managed by them.

The breakfast has lately given birth to another similar labour of love, about which, I am sure, it will interest your readers to hear. Soon after the tent was erected, the directors of the Sabbath School Union, and of the Foundry Boys' Society, asked if they might have the use of it for a Sabbath afternoon meeting they contemplated holding for neglected boys and girls. It was willingly granted by the United Evangelistic Committee, and during the summer large meetings were held. But it was found that fewer of the neglected class than the committee had expected were present, the large number of better dressed boys and girls, and even of men and women, keeping them away. It became evident that some other means of reaching and attracting these must be tried, and it was suggested that some provision similar to the free breakfast should be tried for the starving street children. The idea was promptly acted on, and it was resolved that a piece of bread and ham, with occasionally a mug of soup, should be given to the boys and girls attending the Sabbath afternoon meeting. For two Sabbaths this has been done, and it has had a powerful influence on the very class sought to be reached. The boys and girls who are under better training, and have better homes, feel themselves rather above taking a free dinner, while the poorest and hungriest gladly come to this Christian feast, plain in the extreme though the viands are.

On the last Sunday in October upwards of 1,400 poor ragged, unwashed, unkempt children, most of them very young, assembled in the Drill Hall. It was a most touching spectacle. Though gathered together at random, and most of them evidently for the first time present, they listened in perfect stillness and earnest attention as the chairman of the meeting, Mr. Mackeith, told, simply and graphically, the story of Moses' childhood, under the, to them, attractive title of "The Poor Brickmaker's Boy." All the speaking, etc., was done first—judiciously short, of course, each exercise was. Then the soup and bread were served out, each child receiving a good "hunk" of bread, and about a pint of excellent soup, both of which speedily disappeared.

Time and space forbid any details of this deeply-affecting gathering. We hope through this meeting to get hold of these poor, neglected children, and through them of their parents too. But it is evident that something more is required to meet the startling amount of juvenile destitution and misery which these gatherings reveal to us. Many ameliorating agencies are at work in the shape of the Foundry Boys' Society Meetings, Destitute Children's Emigration Homes, etc., etc., but there is a mass of wretchedness yet untouched by all the existing agencies; and what more can be done to reach that?

A conference was held this evening in Ewing Place Church to consider this one subject, "What *more* can be done for our neglected children?" The church was full to overflowing, and many valuable suggestions were made during the evening, which will, we trust, bear good fruit in vigorous action ere very long. Of the several schemes suggested, all of which were good so far as they went, perhaps the one received with most favour was that of Ragged Industrial Day Schools, on the model of those originated by Sheriff Watson in Aberdeen upwards of thirty years ago, and which the experience of these thirty years has proved so admirably fitted to meet the case.

Thus the work is progressing in Glasgow. And the most hopeful feature of it is that the fresh, vigorous life of our young converts is being now brought into *personal contact* with the spiritual death that reigns in our wynds and alleys. May we not hope that, as in the case of the Shunammite's dead child, when, in place of the inanimate staff, the warm contact of the prophet's body, eye to eye, face to face, hand to hand, brought back the living spirit to the boy, so, by God's grace, through the earnest, warm, living sympathy of our revived hearts, light and life from above may be brought to those spiritually dead, and and thus our "waste places" be restored to order and beauty, our "deserts rejoice and blossom as the rose."

It is our intention at once to begin a day Feeding and Industrial School, on the plan of the Aberdeen ones, by way of experiment.

WEEK-NIGHT LECTURES TO RAGGED SCHOLARS.

An excellent practical essay on the "Church of Christ and Sunday Schools," by the Rev. D. Alexander, of Plaistow, has just been issued by the Sunday School Union as a prize essay. In it the subject of week-night lectures to Sunday scholars is so fully treated that we are led to make the following extracts, in the hope that it will lead many of the more highly educated teachers of Ragged Schools to use their gifts in their own schoolrooms in the manner suggested. In a day when immoral amusements are rendered so attractive to the young, we think that too much cannot be done to keep the entertainments of our scholars in our own hands, so that, at least, the evils of indiscriminate companionship, to say nothing of vicious teachings, may be avoided.

With this view the Ragged School Union, above twenty years ago, purchased several sets of diagrams, or illustrated pictures. These they lend to the affiliated Ragged Schools at an almost nominal fee. They have been used by several schools; but we hope that all will avail themselves of the privilege of so disseminating knowledge as to raise the intellectual and moral tone of our scholars.

Mr. Alexander says, that "the most depressing fact that weighs upon almost every teacher's mind is, that while he or she only has the children for an hour or two on the Sabbath, the world and its temptations have them all the week." In the case of thousands, yea, in the case of a *vast majority* of our Sunday School children, the Christian instruction imparted on one Sunday will be the only Christian influence brought to bear upon them till the next Sunday morning comes round. A little Bible reading there may be at the day school for those who attend it; but we know of how little practical worth this is when accompanied by the thought of other lessons coming immediately after. There will be no home training, no family worship, no holy influence for thousands upon thousands. The streets, and the company the streets afford, the obscene jest, and the drunken oath—*these* will be their teachers until they again meet within the walls of the Sunday School. The very habit of reading the book from the Sabbath School Library will be discouraged, in some cases actually forbidden.

The Sunday School has, therefore, a great work to do in the week in endeavouring to interest and occupy some part of the time of its children: and much of the diversified talent of the church may be usefully employed in this effort. To the teachers, this work *cannot* and *must not* be left. Few of them are fitted for it, and fewer still have means and opportunities sufficient for the purpose of *their* time

and thought for the benefit of our scholars. All such attainments are powers for good, and must not, if possible, be left unemployed in the church's work. We are getting more and more into a scientific age, and more and more our youth is being exposed to the bland and arrogant infidelity of "science falsely so-called." The advocates of this, and the literature of this, are continually proclaiming a divorce between Christianity and Natural Law, between Christian faith and high intelligence; and to see them united, and presented in unison before our senior scholars, would be of immense service to the present rising generation, as well as profitably occupying their time for one evening during the week. Our very boys and girls are to be found saying that "no clever man is a Christian," as if it were an axiom.

Let, then, the pious student of astronomy, geology, chemistry, botany, etc., wherever found in the church, be called upon to serve the next generation by devoting such talents to its benefit. Let a class be formed by any, or all of these, for hearing and taking notes of a course of easy and fundamental lectures upon a given subject, with plenty of experiments and diagrams, the glory of God be shown in his works, and the harmony of scripture with the facts of science ever pointed out. Again, let the gentlemen who have travelled interest a portion of the school weekly with accounts of their travel and experience, and he or she who can read well have another class with which on a week night they may read consecutively some interesting and useful book. The story will sustain the interest, and necessary comment give ample opportunity for pointing many a healthy moral, and giving much sound advice. In a word, let there be (for our senior scholars at least) a "week-night school," different from a week-*day* school, and different from a Sunday School; yet taught by Christian men and for Christian purposes. Our elder scholars are ever drifting away from us, unless seriously impressed with divine things, but such classes would form bonds of union for them to our senior and Bible classes. The church must use all the "*variety*" of talent entrusted to her for her evangelistic purposes. Strongly as she believes in the Word of Truth, and in its application to the conversion of the soul, all her resources must be brought forth in its support if she is to be faithful in her trust. She must be "*wise* to win souls." She has within her hundreds fitted for conducting such classes who either *cannot*, or *will* not, become teachers on the Sunday. Let her secure their services in the week! They are valuable aids if they only help to attach young men and women to the Sunday School at a time when they are naturally inclined to leave it; and, through it, to the means of grace.

Christian ladies, too, may materially help in this direction with the

gifts peculiar to their sex. Sunday School "Sewing Classes" may be easily formed, at which a certain number of girls could be taught to cut, make, and mend their own clothes in such a way that their future life would become more useful and happy than is, unfortunately, often the case. Some wise motherly women might superintend all this, obtaining sewing for charitable purposes when home work was not in sufficient quantity. Surely the absurd vanity of dress, and the influence of the streets at night upon our senior girls, is sad enough to fill our Christian ladies with concern. Would not healthier views on this subject be an acceptable service to Christ, and aid the progress of divine truth? Only get a cheerful room on a winter's night—clean, bright, and a good fire burning—presided over by a kindly Christian face, for such a purpose, and we will venture to say that few rooms in England will be more eagerly hastened to, and few firesides more happy than that will be, while many a sad hour might be banished from many an after life, and many more regard its presiding genius in the sacred light of "mother" than the little ones at home do.

KING'S CROSS MOTHERS' MEETING.

From the article in the October magazine, entitled "Mothers' Meetings—Use and Abuse," I differ very much as to the propriety of commencing with reading a chapter of the Bible. Many of the women cannot attend as punctually as even they wish to do; some have to stay to give their husbands their dinner—such as cabmen's wives, etc.—and so perhaps are prevented from joining us for an hour after class commences. Fourteen or sixteen wives of cabmen are members of my Mothers' Meeting at Britannia Street Ragged School, King's Cross.

Again, it occupies a full hour to take the Clothing and Provident money, each sum having to be entered twice—once on the women's cards, and again in my book. I have above 80 names on my books—50 of whom are in average attendance; 60 of these are putting by their halfpence for clothing; the materials I get at cost price; of course the poor women have the benefit. Again, in the Provident Club I have more than 60 names enrolled. From January to September, inclusive, I allow 1d. on their shillings, the last three months I give them 2d. In some cases they can put by a shilling, while many others can only spare one penny.

I am not aware of any pride being felt by the better-off mothers There is a general kind feeling among them all, which frequently manifests itself by their gathering among themselves three or even

four shillings for the help of one of them who is perhaps suffering from illness, or any unusual home pressure. One of these, who mostly gives me 1s. per week, puts it away in order to have a little money when she goes to Colney Hatch to see two of her children.

As regards their respectable appearance. Some of my women have been in the class for twenty-four or twenty-five years! I should be indeed distressed, after all our help and teaching, to see them in rags! Where would be the good effected? I think it should be one of our endeavours to make the poor respect themselves, as well as to try to make them self-reliant. What tends greatly to improve our personal appearance, is a sale of old clothes, if I am successful in getting them, once in six months. If *very* good, a gown we sell for 6d., of course only to the mothers in the class; a petticoat, 3d.; a flannel ditto, 4d.; a coat, 6d; a pair of trousers, 4d., etc. The proceeds do not go into the School Fund, but when any of the women are confined, they receive 2s. 6d. on their return to the class. This helps them to get a little meat to regain their strength, a treat which they seldom have except on Sundays.

We commence our meeting punctually at half-past two o'clock, and take the money until a quarter to four. Then a little secular reading —a tract or some little useful publication. A hymn is sung. Then we read a few verses, and speak on them for a short time, closing with prayer, after which a text is repeated by each woman present, of their own selection.

During our meetings the poor women sew pieces of print together for quilts, which I have previously arranged at home, sixteen or eighteen of which are distributed yearly, care being taken that three years elapse before the same mother can have another after the first. About 40 of the women now in the class have received a quilt; some have had four or five. The poor cannot purchase these, the quilts being only earned by regular attendance at the class. Still, I do not believe, after nearly twenty years' experience, that either the "2d. on the shilling, the material at cost price, the winter tea-meeting, or the summer treat;" no, nor even the chance of a quilt, are "the *improper inducements*" to attend our meetings, but rather the privilege of putting by a few pence for clothes, coals, etc., and above all, with very many, for the half hour's reading and explanation of God's Word, as shown by the eager countenances and strict attention of the whole class.

M. A. H.

WEARY WORKERS.

THE scheme for giving a week's additional rest, quiet, and recreation to the teachers in Ragged Schools, has been continued another

year, and with benefits equal to former years. Since the last report was furnished in these pages, in December, 1872, the cottage in Bracknell, Berkshire, only has been used for the purpose; the kind and hearty reception the teachers meet with there makes the home most acceptable to the visitors. Since the last report 54 persons have had the benefit of a stay at this cottage, namely, 27 in each year. In addition, a friend at Retford has opened her house for the reception of one of the oldest teachers in the London Ragged Schools, who has been specially invited to it for two seasons, and paying all costs. Many letters of thanks have been received from visitors expressing hearty acknowledgments for the kindness shown to them, and for the benefits to health, and of increased spirits derived from their country rambles, which has enabled them to return to their work with increased desires to spend their renewed energies in the discharge of their useful duties.

One writes: "Accept my sincere thanks for the change of air at Bracknell. I feel my strength increase, and much improved in health." Another: "I and my fellow-visitor desire to thank you for the week's holiday we so much enjoyed. The cottagers did all in their power to make us happy and comfortable. We had the best of food and plenty of it; all we had to regret was the week passed too quickly." A third, who went early in the season: "After spending a most pleasant week at Bracknell, I returned home much refreshed by my rest. The friends were exceedingly kind and thoughtful, and had the week been twice as long the time would have been all too short. The country is looking beautiful; the hedges and woods are almost covered with flowers, and the birds seemed never tired of welcoming back the ever-welcome spring. To my mind it is the most beautiful season of the year. The change from the bare tree to the fresh green buds; the flowers; the singing of birds, all teach the tender love and care of our Father, which reaches to the lily and the sparrow. Again I thank you for sending us, and those by whose kind gifts we were enabled to go."

Many other letters of similar import have been received.

One more word. As almoners, we desire to express our best thanks to those who have so kindly sent the donations, which have been the means of conferring so much real benefit on the Weary Workers. We have been put to no expense to obtain the needful fund which has again been sufficient for the year's expenses. It is satisfactory to know that the promoter of the Weary Worker's Rest, "A. L. O. E.," lives within a mile or so of the cottage, and has frequent opportunities of visiting it, and forming an opinion of the value of this useful and happy medium of doing good, and who, in her last note to us on the subject, said—"*The machinery which you employ for giving to some of your*

valuable workers a change of air and scene, is so simple and inexpensive, and at the same time so effectual, that I trust that it will this year be set in motion early. No one can calculate the advantage, not only to the teachers, but to the scholars, likely to result from the former returning to their arduous labours with spirits refreshed and frames invigorated by a week's rest in the country."

Contributions may, as usual, be sent to Mr. Gent, 1, Exeter Hall, London, W.C.

GOSPEL LIGHT IN A GARRET.

STOPPING for a short time in a village at the north, during a summer tour, and having occasion to need some plain sewing done, I was directed by my washerwoman to an old woman who lived in a lowly part of the town, in an attic, and earned her support by the needle.

On finding the poor dwelling, I passed by the lower story, which seemed to be occupied by a number of persons, of not very cleanly appearance, and reached a narrow staircase in the back part of the building. A small room opened at the head of the stairs, which wore an aspect of great neatness and poverty. An old carpet covered the floor, scrupulously clean, and well-mended. A table, covered with a scanty piece of white cotton, stood on one side of the room, and a few books gave an appearance of cheer to the otherwise somewhat desolate apartment. A very small cooking stove, well blackened, added to the look of comfort.

The only occupant was the old woman to whom I had been directed. She was dressed in a faded calico, very clean; a plain collar, and a pure white muslin cap bespoke the purity of her mind and heart. Having made known the errand, and received satisfactory answers, I remarked, "You seem to be alone here."

"Yes," she replied; "I have lived in this room thirty years."

The tear started to my eye, and my heart melted with pity.

"Thirty years alone! and have you no friends?"

"I had a husband, and an only daughter. It was pleasant to see her coming in every night from her work: for she used to go out sewing in families during the day; but it is a long time since she died, and I have been alone since; I miss her very much."

She cast down her glance as she said this, and I thought I saw her eye glisten. I was moved with sympathy and tenderness. An old woman, with naught in retrospect but sad memories! And the prospect! An open grave! a dark, cold valley! a disabled age! a lonely

death-bed! Poor, poor humanity! O to be born to live for such a fate as this! and to be an old bereaved woman, living alone in an upper chamber! Almost in an agony, I cast about for a refuge for this shipwrecked one. Was there no loving embrace to enfold that aged form? No strong arm to guide the feeble step? No heart to do her reverence? My eye rested upon the table, and with an unspeakable feeling of relief, I remarked cheerfully, "I am glad to see that big *Book* on the table; I hope you get some comfort out of that?"

"Yes, indeed, ma'am, I do; it is all the comfort I have, and it is enough. I have a Friend that always sticks close to me. I never feel lonely. That Book is comfort enough!"

"You really feel it to be so, do you?"

"Most certainly, ma'am; I never know what it is to feel alone; I tell *Him* all."

"Let me ask you a question. Could you now have back your husband and daughter, and be surrounded with every luxury of home, would you take them in exchange for the comforts and hopes you enjoy from that Book? Tell me truly."

In an instant she replied, and her aged face was illumined with the earnestness of her answer,

"No, indeed! Never! Nothing on earth would I take for what I get there?"

How could I doubt her! I came down the little narrow back staircase full of joy and wonder. That human heart had found its only, its everlasting rest!

And when I remembered that there are hundreds of such lonely women in the Mothers' Meetings conducted in Ragged Schools, I could only bless God, who had by these agencies illumined many a kitchen and garret with gospel light.

Hints for Teachers.

EVIDENCE-STUDY.

In a recent address of Lord Shaftesbury to the Sunday School teachers of Glasgow, he gave the following counsel as to the *necessity* of the study of the evidence of Revelation, in a day when scepticism assails the very foundations of the faith. He said:—One piece of advice, or counsel rather, might he venture to give to those who were in the guidance of Sunday Schools? He wished much that they would make it a necessary part of their teaching to instruct the children in a due and adequate knowledge of

the evidences of revealed religion. The children ought to be taught in such a way as to be able to give a reason of the hope that was in them. And it was the more necessary now, because children were daily exposed to gibes and sneers, and statements of difficulties from children of their own age—and he was afraid too they heard it from adults, from those who ought never to utter it in the presence of children.

This training in the evidences was essentially necessary. A man might be very conversant, indeed, with the whole of Scripture, and not be ready to give upon the instant an answer to some infidel objection. There were many infidels who were up to the whole controversy, who would try the best Bible scholar in the room, and start a difficulty that would take them some time to refute, and, unless refuted on the spot, the man went away thinking he had won a victory, and those who stood by were inclined to believe he had done so. The children should be grounded on the full evidence, on the full assurance, that the Bible is the Word of God, revealed by God himself for the salvation of man; were it so there would be a great blessing to them and all of them throughout the whole of their lives.

Ten thousand difficulties occurred in Scripture, even to honest minds. Some were stated scientifically, some were stated morally, some were stated doctrinally. They might not be able to answer on the moment, some might not be able to answer at all; but if they were fully grounded, and the child was fully grounded on the truth that the Bible was the Word of God, he set at naught all these difficulties. He said of each of these, "I believe to be true, though I cannot understand it. Perhaps I shall understand it later in life, and if not, I shall understand it so in the world to come. I believe, as it stands before me, it is the Word of God. Talk all the nonsense you can, and bring all the arguments you can, all the persuasion in your power, you shall not turn me from the position I have taken up, that this is the Word of God. I believe every syllable of it, and rest my salvation upon it."

VISITATION OF SCHOLARS.

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL teacher had taught a class of boys for years. At last his health failed him, and he must die. The thought of leaving his large class of boys unconverted, and about to enter into manhood, was more than he could bear.

He told a Christian brother of his anxiety. This very wholesome advice was given: Ask the Lord to convert them, and go, while your strength remains, and tell each one of your anxiety; and pray with them, and try to lead them on; and He will surely answer your prayer.

The advice was followed. A carriage was procured, and he went and found each one at his home. Again and again were the visits repeated, and one by one did the young men give their hearts to the Saviour, until, the day in which the faithful teacher passed to his rest, he sent for the last one, who, at his dying bed, received the Saviour. And then, surrounded by such a class, so blessed through his labours, he passed to the life beyond.

This large class of now Christian young men stood at the dividing waters, and saw their teacher de-

part. They saw the magnitude and reality of the life beyond, amid the eternal years, and love as the crowning glory of that life; and then turned to bless the world with true lives and faithful labours.

Children's Page.

THE LITTLE RAG-GATHERER.

C. M. WAS brought to the Refuge connected with St. Giles's Ragged School by a benevolent man, living in the neighbourhood of Gospel Oak, Kentish Town. He had heard of this poor forlorn lad, but had never seen him, so he resolved to start early in the morning in search of him, and about seven o'clock in the morning he started off. After searching several unfinished houses in the locality, he found the poor lad and brought him to the Refuge.

From the account given by the boy, it appears the father was a decent mechanic, but died a few years since, leaving a widow and this boy. While the mother lived she and her son dwelt together happily and somewhat comfortably, but sickness overtook the poor woman and she died, and a parish funeral—the dread of the poor—was her lot. The parish officers came in and took possession of the few sticks belonging to the poor widow, and the poor boy was left homeless.

During the winter he took shelter in one of the unfinished houses of the neighbourhood. There he slept at night all through the winter, begging about for a bit of food during the day, and then resorting to his lonely lodging at night.

The friend who brought the lad to the Refuge had often heard of him, and at last was stirred up to make an effort to look after him, and if possible to rescue him. His efforts were not in vain. He sought and found the poor lad and brought him to the Refuge. Just to show the hardships this lonely lad had passed through during the winter, it may be stated that the day before he came to the Refuge all he had was a halfpenny-worth of soup from the kitchen in Kentish Town. When asked how he got the money to buy a ticket for the soup, he said "I went to a dusthole and scraped up a few bones and rags, and sold them for a halfpenny, with which I bought a ticket, and so got the soup."

Reader, will you remember this and similar boys in your prayers? If you had seen his tears while standing in the office of the Refuge, and when the chords of his heart were touched as the secretary referred to his mother, and the friend he had lost when she died, you would never have forgotten him.

He is now on the "Chichester," being trained for a seafaring life. What a change from gathering bones and rags for bread, to a life of usefulness and prosperity!

Correspondence.

WEEK-NIGHT CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

To the Editor of the Ragged School Union Magazine.

Sir,—Children's Churches are mainly useful as an agency for helping onward the more thoughtful and earnest children. Many of these have little encouragement at home, and need some help by the way. The faithful teacher who earnestly longs for the conversion of his scholars surely will not be contented with a brief hour or two on the Sunday, but will try to reach them at other times.

Every Ragged School ought to have a Week-evening Service of some kind, with this aim in view. There could, at least, be a little gathering for singing and prayer, and a few words of Scripture exposition, the rest of the time being given to personal converse. If only two teachers would begin with a meeting for their *own* classes, it would be a step in the right direction.

Singing is an important element in Children's Services. The hymns should be bright and cheerful, and set to lively tunes, and those should be chosen which contain the clearest statements of gospel truth. A few words of comment on the verses of the hymn as it is given out are exceedingly useful; and stray remarks like these have often been made means of blessing.

Prayer should be short and simple, and in words that the children can join in and make their own. At many Services at least one of the prayers is repeated by the children, sentence by sentence, after the superintendent.

Silent prayer often has a deeply solemnising effect. "I do so love those sweet moments of *silent* prayer," wrote one dear child. Several others have told us that it was during the silent prayer that they gave themselves to the Saviour.

Scripture exposition should take an important place in the Service. It may be made thoroughly interesting to the children. In the hands of a wise superintendent it is a valuable means of giving systematic religious instruction.

The address should be earnest, practical, and *not too long*. The gospel message in all its fulness, and freeness, and simplicity, is what the children want. The speaker whose heart is full of his subject, and who tells the old, old story of the Saviour's love, will never fail to interest them.

Yours, &c.,

B.

Ragged School Union.

THE monthly meeting of the Managing Committee was held on November 13th, the contributions for October were reported to be £108, and the payments to be £277 14s. 10d. The current account at the bankers is overdrawn by £182 18s. 11d. In consequence of this defficiency, it was agreed to insert advertisements in the newspapers for contributions.

Quarterly grants, amounting to £60 12s. 6d., were voted to fourteen schools.

The two school agents presented their half-yearly reports on the monitors employed in day schools. They reported that 196 monitors were employed in 36 day schools; all of whom received daily training lessons from the paid teachers. They aided in teaching 4,185 scholars. Thelocal committee paid £129 1s. 10d. for their services, towards which amount the committee of the central society voted £62 3s. 11d.

A special grant of £10 was voted to Northey Street, towards the expense of fittings, etc.; and also a grant of £6 towards the salary of evening master.

An annual grant of £9 was voted to Gray's Yard School towards the salary of evening master.

A grant of £2 10s. was voted to Wentworth Street for school material.

Applications for grants from the schools in Cranworth Street, Brewers' Court, New Tothill Street, and Shadwell Station will be considered at the next meeting.

Facts and Scraps.

CHEQUER ALLEY, CITY ROAD.—The committe of Chequer Alley School have commenced the Sunday scholars' winter entertainments, the first having taken place on Nov. 3, when Mr. Sidney Scott, of Canonbury Tower, delivered a lecture, illustrated with dissolving views, on "The Life of Moses." The spacious school-room was crowded, and the able manner in which the lecturer kept up the interest of his youthful audience is deserving of the highest praise.

CHURCH PLACE, PADDINGTON GREEN.—A Boys' Night School has been added to the other operations of this Ragged School. They are all employed in the dust-yards or on the canal. The master's salary is paid by a lady.

FITZROY MARKET.—A Psalmody

Class has just been commenced. It attracts an average of seventy boys and girls.

FOX COURT, GRAY'S INN ROAD.—In no Ragged Night School is a systematic plan of reward more successfully carried out. Thus, at the close of school each boy receives tickets (S.S.U. small text cards), three, two, one, or *none*, according to his behaviour. He can exchange twelve of these tickets for either a spelling book, copy book, bottle of ink, slate and pencil, "Family Friend," etc.; six for a "Children's Treasury," etc., three for a penholder, or he may save them up for a Bible, Testament, or other book. Twelve tickets count as one penny.

GRAY'S YARD, OXFORD STREET.—A Boys' Night School, which has just been added, completes the operations of this well worked Ragged School. All have attained thirteen years, and though of a very rough type, they are well disciplined by an experienced master.

SERMON LANE, ISLINGTON.—On November the 3rd, the celebrated author, George Macdonald, LL.D., gave a lecture on behalf of this Ragged School at Myddelton Hall. The subject selected was Tennyson's "In Memoriam." About £30 was thereby added to the funds of the School.

HAMILTON PLACE, KING'S CROSS.—A very flourishing Sunday Night work is carried on here, so much so, that with all the ingenuity exercised for the creation of space by the erection of a gallery, the utilization of a vault, and the occupancy of some rooms of a house in the rear, the place is too strait for the numbers, and many are shut out. To aid in providing the means for additional accommodation, a bazaar was recently held in the school premises. This small unobtrusive effort, through the love and energy of the teachers, realised over £30 clear. Three or four of the male teachers—who are occupied from morn till eve in mechanical operations—spent the whole of one night in making the necessary arrangements. Besides the Sunday School, there are Prayer Meetings, Adult Services, a Mutual Improvement Society, Services of Song, Band of Hope, etc. Mr. Reekie and Mr. Watson, with a devoted band of twenty-three teachers, ask for public sympathy and pecuniary aid; and they well deserve them.

NEWCASTLE RAGGED SCHOOL.—This institution, in addition to the ordinary operations of Ragged Schools embraces certified Industrial Schools, the social results of which have been most valuable. We are glad to learn that it has just received a legacy from the late W. J. Hutchinson, Esq., of £1,000.

A COMPARISON.—An instructive method of dealing with the enormous expenditnre on strong drink will be found by placing alongside it the amounts spent upon articles of admitted utility. Expended in 1872:—On tea, sugar, coffee, and cocoa, £42,000,000; on drink, £120,000,000; excess on drink, £78,000,000. On bread, £73,000,000; on drink, £120,000,000; excess on drink, £47,000,000. On butchers' meat, £110,000,000; on drink, £120,000,000; excess on drink, £10,000,000. The total amount at the credit of all investors in the Savings Banks and Post Office Savings Banks at the close of 1872 was £60,000,000, or just one-half of the drink-money spent in a single year; but the whole amount invested in that year was

£16,700,000, or less than one-seventh of the money spent on intoxicating liquor. The gross public expenditure of the United Kingdom in the official year ending the 31st of March, 1873, was less than £71,000,000, or £47,000,000 less than the expenditure on alcohol.

BONA FIDE TRAVELLERS?—The case of the landlord of the Highbury Park Tavern, decided at the Clerkenwell Police Court, presents a new complication. It is our old friend the bonâ fide traveller turning up again; as usual, in a questionable shape. The charge was that he had served refreshments during the prohibited hours. Something like a "pilgrimage" seems to have passed that way on Sunday, the 23rd of September, for a police constable counted 1,320 bonâ fide (!) travellers entering the house between a quarter to ten and one o'clock, and 220 between three and six. There was, of course, room for a very natural doubt whether all these persons were really travellers. Mr. Cooke was of opinion that the house was improperly open; but as the landlord asked each person as he went in whether he was a traveller, and received in all cases an affirmation, no fine could be inflicted. It is surely time that this distinction should be abolished, as it only makes legislation a farce.

BOARDING-OUT OF PAUPER CHILDREN.—The report just issued by Mr. Peek's Committee for Promoting the Boarding-out of Pauper Orphans, shows the results of the boarding-out system since its adoption in 1872. It appears from official returns made to the Local Government Board that the number of children boarded-out in England and Wales in June last was 2,401. Of these, 2,095 were boarded-out within the unions to which they belonged, and 306 outside their own unions, and the general result, as set forth in the report of the President of the Local Government Board, is stated to be satisfactory. The reports from the inspectors as to the condition of the boarded-out children were generally favourable as to their health and management.

BOY-GAMBLING. — At Brighton Police Court, a publican was fined 40s. and costs, for knowingly permitting gambling in his house, with a game known as the "Japanese Tommy." *Ten boys*, between fifteen and seventeen years of age, were found on the premises one night by two police-constables.

WORKING MEN'S HOUSES.—An Act of Parliament received the Royal assent, the object of which is to facilitate the erection of dwellings for working men on land belonging to municipal corporations in England. It provides that where a corporation determines that land belonging to them shall be converted into sites for working men's dwellings, on obtaining the approval of the Treasury to the corporation making for that purpose grants for leases of 999 years or for less terms then the provisions mentioned in the Act are to apply. The costs and expenses are to be paid out of the borough rates. The forms in the schedule as to grants and leases show how concise legal documents can be made. The Act is now in operation.

DONKEY DRIVERS. — Baroness Burdett Coutts lately distributed prizes among those donkey drivers of Torquay who had distinguished themselves by humane treatment of the patient brutes under their con-

trol. The drivers and owners who had exhibited horses, ponies, and donkeys, afterwards took tea together, provided for them by the baroness. One of the horses exhibited is said to have reached the extraordinary age of thirty-eight years.

FARNINGHAM HOME FOR LITTLE BOYS.—In this institution there are children whose fathers suffered the last penalty of the law. There are children whose fathers are, at the present moment, in penal servitude. And there are children whose mothers had died from the effects of drunkenness.

Notices of Meetings.

MILDMAY PARK.

The annual meeting of the friends and supporters of the Children's Special Service Mission was held in the Conference Hall, Mildmay Park. A short abstract of the report was read by the honorary secretary, Mr. Bishop. It appears there is a division of the band for each quarter of London. There are several leaders —one or two in each division; and when a series of services is to be held, one or other of these leaders takes the conduct and management of them. Some of the services had been very well attended — on one occasion as many as three thousand children and their teachers assembled to listen to an address by Mr. Spiers; and in Liverpool, on another occasion, four thousand children assembled. A million of the hymn-sheets used at the special evangelistic services had been issued. The results were very encouraging. Of 181 belenging to the Christian instruction class at St. Jude's, Mildmay Park, 121 give good evidence that they are consistent and most of them earnest Christians. Of the 189 still in attendance at the class in connection with Surrey Chapel, 27 are church members, and most of them teachers; 149 attend regularly, and are consistent in their conduct; and only 13 are reported as unsatisfactory.

As illustrating the need that the attention of religious people should be turned to this question, Dr. Paterson said that of 384 churches in which inquiries had been made, with a church membership of 70,374, the proportion of children members was one in 38¼, under 18, and one in 505 under 14. In 191 churches, 40 large and 151 smaller, it was found there were no members under 18. These figures showed, he maintained, that the churches had not done their duty. The doctor then went on to argue that children were as likely to be brought into the knowledge of the truth and the enjoyment of Christ's saving power as those of riper years. Of course they were not to expect the religion of children to be the same as that of their elders. Children must be expected to exhibit more or less of

the frolicsomeness of youth. He feared parents and ministers and teachers often put a stumbling block in their way. Old people might be useful in the church, but if they got the children they would be much more so. As it was, many grown-up Christians had to waste half their strength battling with bad habits, and that would not have been the case had they been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

MILTON YARD, ISLINGTON.

The eighteenth annual meeting of the Milton Yard Ragged School was held on Nov. 2 at the Holy Trinity Schools, Cloudesley Street, under the presidency of the Rev. R. C. Billing, vicar of the district.

Mr. Bradley, the hon. secretary, stated that prizes awarded by the Ragged School Union had to be presented to three girls and two boys for keeping their situations with good character for twelve months. Two of these had already taken prizes for good conduct at previous annual meetings. In addition, the committee had selected sixteen well-conducted children for rewards for good conduct. He then read the report of the committee for the year 1873-4, which stated that during the year there had been 8,100 attendances at the school, or an average of 52 boys and 44 girls. The school had been open 170 evenings for boys and 39 for girls. The deposits in the penny bank amounted to £22 with 113 depositors. The Lending Library was fully patronised, and Mothers' Meetings had been held with an average attendance of 15.

Major-General Sir W. Hill said while the question of educating the poor was distracting the country, it was a peculiar pleasure to him to find that the religious instruction given in this school was of a kind to raise it in the estimation of all who were interested in the future of the nation, and he could not think how, in a Christian country like England, persons could be found who would bring up their children without a knowledge of Christ, of God, or of the consequences of sin. He had passed most of his life in India, and he could give them a fact with reference to that country which would shame the secularists of this. In India the Government could only give a secular education to the people, and they could only educate the men, because women were not allowed by the custom of the country to come out of doors to receive instruction. The effect was that the men were as well educated as the men of this country. They had forsaken idolatry, but they had grown up without any religion. Being intellectual men, with their minds expanded, they called upon the Government to educate their daughters. The Government attempted this with a secular system, but these men said, "We will not allow our wives and daughters to be educated on a secular system, they must have some religion." Did not that put the secularists of this country to shame? These were idolators who asked this. As Christ had said, they had the poor always with them, and as Christian men they could not throw off their responsibility to give them the Bible which they enjoyed themselves. He heartily sympathised with their work, and hoped the school would continue to prosper.